INTRODUCTION

‘Family is a life jacket in a stormy sea of life’ wise words by J K Rowling to sit and contemplate. Family, synonym of trust, companionship, comfort, compassion, support and love. Home is one’s sense of belonging that inspires us to be the most authentic version of ourselves. The family is the foundation of a person's formative experiences and socialization since it is a fundamental institution in society. It includes a wide variety of arrangements, including blended, single-parent, nuclear, and extended families, each with its own dynamics and effects on the individuals within. Family environment depends upon several physical and psychological factors. Income, the building space, member count, availability of resources, educational background of parents, mutual understanding and communication play significant role in a child’s development.

As per the ecological systems theory proposed by Bronfenbrenner in 1979[1], the family functions within a wider framework that is shaped by cultural, societal, and economic elements that impact its composition and efficiency. Fundamentally, the family serves as the main institution for socialization, imparting norms, values, and guidance in addition to offering emotional support, direction, and a sense of community. The family's capacity for flexibility and perseverance in confronting difficulties, emphasizing its function as a safe haven where people acquire vital social skills (Hetherington (1999)[2] and Bengtson (2001)[3].

The influence of a family reaches far beyond its immediate members. The nature and quality of family relationships have a significant influence on an individual's psychological growth and overall welfare. The importance of stable attachment bonds that are created within the family, explaining how these bonds promote emotional stability and influence relationships with others in the future (Bowlby, 1988[4]; Ainsworth, 1978)[5].

Role Of Family

In the fragile adolescent year, a family is one thing that a child needs for guidance, support and strength to draw sustenance for the outside world. The type of parenting one receives is also significant when it comes to shaping the dynamics and atmosphere within a family. Good parenting practices involve prioritizing certain values, behaviours and communication styles (Bornstein L, Bornstein MH (2007)[6]. A child develops his/her attachment style according to the parenting he/she receives. This means, how a person behaves in adulthood has its roots to his childhood experience (Rothrauff TC, Cooney TM, An JS. (2009)[7].

Children and adolescents benefit greatly from a supportive family environment, which fosters empathy, emotional intelligence, and good interpersonal skills. Young kids learn how to manage relationships and social circumstances by watching healthy communication, conflict resolution, and compassionate behaviour within the family unit (Dolan P, Žegarac N, Arsić J. (2020)[8]. Furthermore, family support systems can operate as a buffer against the harmful effects of stress, trauma, or adversity that people may experience throughout their life.

Children who do not get enough attention and validation in their households tend to outside world seeking attention, emotional fulfilment and validation, that contributes in detachment from their family members. These children find themselves inclining outside towards their 'made – up' family and hence distancing themselves from the house in the process. They like spending time with mates rather than their own house. Sometimes this 'lost connection' with family proves detrimental for a child, especially an adolescent as he/she may become a 'people pleaser' (Ehman K. (2021)[9] People pleaser children struggle to say 'no' even in uncomfortable situations and they fall victim to toxic, energy sucking and dominant personalities who take undue advantage of them. As a result, the child never feels fulfilled and believes that its his/her job is to keep others happy; losing his sense of 'self' in doing so.

On the other hand, dysfunctional family dynamics or disruptions in the family structure, such as parental separation, abuse, or neglect, can have a significant negative impact on a child's psychological and emotional growth. These events can lead to a variety of mental health disorders, behavioural challenges, and difficulties maintaining safe attachments later in life (Higgins DJ, McCabe MP. (2003)[10] Promoting strong family relationships and offering tools to assist families facing problems is critical for developing resilient, well-adjusted individuals and communities.

Furthermore, as society evolves, the concept of "family" grows in diversity and inclusivity. Non-traditional family structures, such as single-parent households, same-sex parenting, and multigenerational living arrangements, are becoming more prevalent. It is critical to acknowledge and validate these many family structures, ensuring that all individuals, regardless of family makeup, have access to the love, support, and sense of belonging that a solid family unit can bring.

Moreover, its crucial for parents and family to make their children feel seen and heard for developing a connection build on trust, love and validation they seek. For parents, it’s important to try understanding new generation’s aspirations, goals and thought process in order to bridge the gap between generations in the ever-evolving world.

In today’s era, parents move to big cities with the intention to give their child better opportunities in the form of premium education, lifestyle and career options. They immerse themselves in corporate world for arranging monetary funds for survival in bustling towns. Sometimes, both parents get so busy in making money that they neglect their children’s emotional needs. The child may feel alone and deserted in the absence of his/her parents. This result in loss of attachment between child and parents (Stevenson O. (2008)[11].

The disconnection that develops during childhood worsens when the children reach in their teenage. The most prominent issue that arises between a building teenage and parents in the 'generation gap'. The feeling that 'parent will never understand me' is like a never-ending choir for a teenager. The surging hormones that are taking them towards adulthood often makes adolescents moody, aggressive and dramatic that results in the 'rebellious' behaviour they display (Aggarwal M. et., al. (2017)[12].

Similarly, for parents, this behaviour is confusing and may become irritating at times. The irritation may out turn into lashing out or may worse in serious conflicts. Therefore, these situations demand the contribution of both parties where active listening and solution focused discussion should be promoted. The parents/caregiver, being more matured and experienced should always be ready to compromise and find a 'middle way' for their teenage children. These proactive wills certainly develop a secure healthy and fulfilling family setting that an adolescent aspires. A good family setting means a bond so pure where no one gets left behind or forgotten a setting that provides youths 'a link to the past, and a bridge to the future' (Deal RL, Matthews DN. (2018)[13].

Further, a good family setting offers youths and adolescents an essential framework within which they can develop their sense of identity and self-worth, learn how to resolve conflicts, and learn problem-solving techniques. Different family dynamics—parental warmth, communication styles, styles of discipline, and the existence of support structures—have a significant impact on people's psychological adjustment and emotional resilience at various phases of life, including the crucial transition to college life.

College life is a pivotal stage in a student's journey, characterized by academic pursuits, personal growth, and social exploration. It's the place where students cross over from adolescence to adulthood, establishing an environment that includes rich experiences that mold

their identities and goals in addition to classrooms and textbooks. The move from school to college is significant in many aspects since, the children have grown up and spent half of their lives in their safe heavens – the schools (Patton LD et., al. (2016)[14]. Therefore, the teachers and school friends are no longer there to support them. There are many hurdles that come in the road when one joins a college. Students are required to blend in fresh setting where they are surrounded by strangers and unfamiliar faces which happens to be quite intimidating for most of them.

Further, student also rely upon friends and teachers when they are in school, whereas college teaches them to be autonomous. It fortifies and prepares them to embark on their own journey and encourages the students to be more serious in their careers. The spirit of college life is not limited to the classroom. Students engage in a wide range of extracurricular activities, clubs, and social circles within this dynamic period of their lives. These opportunities develop leadership, teamwork, and flexibility abilities in addition to friendship. Extracurricular activities give students the chance to explore interests outside of the classroom and act as catalysts for their holistic development. Participating in athletics, the arts, volunteer work, and leadership positions fosters time management, leadership abilities, and a feeling of community (Foubert & Grainger, 2006).[15]

Student learn to socialize in the diverse environment that a college offers and form their opinions that enhances their personality and an individual characters. They act according to their free will which makes them 'confident' in their decision and perspective. Self-discovery and personal growth are hallmarks of college life. Living away from home provides students with the independence they need to make independent decisions, properly manage their time, and deal with the challenges of adult life (Oelofsen M. (2014)[16]. A more nuanced understanding of the world and their place in it is fostered by exposing them to a variety of

cultures, ideas, and perspectives. Students gain resilience, flexibility, and an understanding of who they are beyond their academic endeavours via the process of trial and error in their college life.

Challenges Faced During College Life

Considering late adolescence and early adulthood, things become even more critical and confusing for students. For many, it's the first time they are living away from home, managing finances and making significant life decisions independently. In terms of academics, this shift is distinguished by increased rigor and self-discipline. Encouraging academic growth is one of the main benefits of college living. Intellectual growth in students is facilitated by a demanding curriculum, exposure to a variety of subjects, and the pursuit of specialized knowledge. The research and critical thinking require analytical abilities that are necessary for success in their chosen field (Montgomery MJ, Côté JE. (2003)[17]. A lifelong admiration for learning is instilled in students by the academic rigor, which also prepares them for future professional adventures. Students should be able to handle a greater workload, think critically and delve deeper into the subject. It becomes quite difficult to balance a plethora of extra curriculars, part time jobs, internships and academics.

College students may experience a great deal of stress and anxiety due to the demands of their coursework. Increased stress levels can result from the pressure to do well on tests, meet deadlines, and complete outstanding coursework. Ineffective stress management can lead to anxiety, which can negatively affect focus, sleep patterns, and mental health in general. An academic stress cycle that negatively impacts a student's psychological well-being can be worsened by the fear of failing and the never-ending quest of perfection (Pfeiffer D. (2001)[18].

Psychological disturbances can result from the adjustment process for a considerable proportion of college students to this new environment. These difficulties, which include a wide

range of problems from substance abuse and depression to stress and anxiety, can have a major impact on a student's general well-being and academic achievement (Rattermann, 2014)[19].

Despite growing awareness, mental health issues are still stigmatized in many college environments. When faced with psychological disorders, this stigma may discourage students from getting treatment. Accessing the resources and services required for mental health well-being may be impeded by fear of judgment or the false belief that asking for help is a sign of weakness.

Support System Provide By 'Home'

All these new challenges usually take a toll on a student's mind where they are in absolute need of someone who's got their backs. This is where family, the 'home' comes into play. In addition to providing a secure forum for students to vent their feelings, the family setting acts as an ongoing support system. Having regular conversations with family members offers an emotional support system that promotes resilience and good mental health (Pinkerton J, Dolan P. (2007)[20]. Students are inspired to take on challenges head-on when they know they have a supportive network to turn to, knowing they are a part of a compassionate and understanding family. Therefore, when a child who have had a healthier family dynamic is exposed to such adversities, he tends to react more positively or in a healthier way, enjoying the process and worrying less about the outcomes.

An effective support structure, particularly within the family unit, can help college students overcome their mental health difficulties. A supportive and understanding home atmosphere can provide a safe space for students to openly express their difficulties, seek advice, and get emotional support. Family members who actively listen, support the student's experiences, and provide nonjudgmental advice can help the student develop a feeling of belonging and resilience, which is critical for navigating the complexity of college (Pedrelli P, at., al. (2015)[21].

Also, families can actively encourage healthy coping skills and self-care routines for their college-bound children. Encourage healthy behaviors such as regular exercise, mindfulness techniques, and adequate sleep hygiene to help manage stress and anxiety (Walker Z, at., al. (2018)[22]. Families can also help students develop time management and organizing skills, which are essential for managing academic expectations and extracurricular activities.

It is also crucial to consider that family dynamics and structures vary greatly, and certain students may encounter unique obstacles as a result of their familial circumstances. For example, first-generation college students or those from low-income families may not have the same familial support or resources as their peers (Collier PJ, Morgan DL. (2008)[23]. In such circumstances, higher education institutions can intervene by offering comprehensive support services, mentorship programs, and financial aid to close the gap and create a fairer and more supportive atmosphere for all students.

In addition, educational institutions have a responsibility to encourage mental health awareness and reduce stigma surrounding obtaining treatment. Promoting campus-wide efforts like peer support groups, counseling services, and mental health workshops can help to foster an open and understanding environment. Furthermore, working with mental health specialists and community organizations can give students with specialized care and resources customized to their specific needs.

Finally, developing a feeling of community and belonging in the college setting is critical for supporting mental health. Educational institutions may empower students to thrive both intellectually and personally by building an inclusive and supportive environment in which they feel appreciated and understood, laying the groundwork for a rewarding and successful college experience.

Impact Of Family Environment on College Students

A college student's life can be significantly influenced by unhealthy family dynamics in multiple ways. A student's emotional health is negatively impacted by unhealthy patterns of conflict, abuse, neglect and ill communication style. These kinds of exposure could show up as challenges in building and maintaining relationships during college. Students from toxic family background may have trouble expressing themselves, find it difficult to trust and be afraid of forming genuine connections because of their prior experiences.

In recent years, there has been a growing body of research dedicated to understanding the factors that contribute to these psychological disturbances among college students. One such factor that has gained attention is the role of the family environment (Kaur, (2021).[24] The family serves as the primary social context for individuals, shaping their values, beliefs, and behaviours. As students transition to college, their family background can continue to exert a profound influence on their psychological well-being (Wigtil & Henriques, (2015).[25]

During the initial stages of life, the family is the main socializing agency. A child who has always had conflicts, constant neglect lack of expression and poor communication in family will always find himself/herself amidst constant self-doubt, and a feeling of unpreparedness will be perpetual. Academic achievement can be severely hampered by a dysfunctional family setup. A student's capacity to concentrate on their studies may be disrupted by a lack of guidance, inspiration, or even basic resources like a calm and comfortable study space. Family-related emotional distress can result in poorer academic performance in the long run by impairing concentration and may lead to absenteeism.

The quality of family environment contributes significantly to our capacity of stress coping. Turner & Cole, (2018)[26] through their study have reported that susceptibility to psychological disorders has been linked to dysfunctional family dynamics, which are typified by high levels of conflict, a lack of communication, or insufficient emotional support. These kinds of

surroundings can exacerbate anxiety, depression, and low self-esteem in college students, which can have an impact on their general wellbeing and academic performance.

On the other side, a loving and caring family setting can help shield a person from psychological distress (Holt-Lunstad, Birmingham, & Jones, 2018)[27]. College students who experience strong family cohesion, open communication, and a sense of belonging are more likely to have better mental health outcomes. Disruptions to these familial characteristics, such as loss, parental divorce, or conflict, can, still have a substantial effect on a person's psychological stability as they adjust to life in college.

Prevalence Of Psychological Disturbances Among College Students

There have been few attempts to understand the role of family in sustaining the overall balance in life while managing all the challenges. Almeida, E. et al., (2011)[28], and Johnson, R. L. et al. (2019)[29] have highlighted the importance of family dynamics and relationships in shaping a student's emotional and mental state during their college years. It is essential to recognize that these family-related factors are not limited to just the immediate family members but can extend to broader familial influences, including cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds. Students who pass college but are unable to handle the challenges of life and their future careers suffer serious consequences when their mental health is neglected (Nanda, 2012)[30].

Furthermore, a student's mental health may be impacted by the emotional baggage that comes from an unsatisfactory family environment, which can result in elevated stress, anxiety, and depression. These obstacles may interfere with their ability to focus, stay enthusiastic and thrive at college. Patricia Insúa Cerretani & Paola Bully Garay (2017)[31] conducted a study of nearly 5000 university students, 47.4% had psychological problems that exceeded the clinical cut-off point on CORE-OM scales, indicating possible distress. Thus, according to the subjective well-being scale, 63.8% of students reported weakness or distress, were negative about the future,

and felt overwhelmed by their concerns. On the worries/symptoms scale, 60.5% reported anxiety, tension, sleeping difficulties, difficulty setting aside worries, and feelings of guilt.

Additionally, students from unstable families may develop unhealthy coping mechanisms against the adversities that college life furnishes. When confronted with hardships, they may find it difficult to ask for assistance, manage disagreements or manage their time (Orozco V. (2007)[32]. This capacity to adjust and to succeed in this new environment may be hampered by this lack of support and direction, that can make college even more daunting.

The impact of the family environment on college students' psychological well-being goes beyond the direct family dynamics. Socioeconomic level and cultural background also have a substantial impact on the family environment and students' mental health. Students from low-income or marginalized backgrounds may confront additional stressors and problems in college, worsening psychological dysfunctions (Troy D, at., al. (2022)[33].

Students from low socioeconomic backgrounds frequently encounter financial restraints, which can contribute to increased stress, worry, and feelings of insecurity. The pressure of supporting themselves or contributing to their family's financial requirements can have a negative impact on their mental health, making it difficult to focus on their academics and participate in activities that enhance general well-being. Also, these kids may lack access to resources and support networks that could help them overcome the obstacles they experience, exacerbating their difficulties.

Cultural influences can also influence how family relationships affect a student's psychological well-being. Some cultures may stigmatize mental health disorders, making it difficult for students to seek help or openly share their struggles. Furthermore, societal expectations and conventions about family responsibilities and relationships might influence how much help and understanding students receive from their families during their college years.

These students may lack direction and understanding from their families regarding the responsibilities and difficulties of college life, resulting in feelings of loneliness and a loss of support. They may also feel pressure to achieve and meet family expectations, which can lead to increased stress and anxiety.

It is critical for higher education institutions to recognize and treat the various familial and cultural issues that affect students' mental health. Providing specialized support services, such as financial aid, counselling, and mentorship programs, can help students from various backgrounds overcome their obstacles (Murphy NA, (2007)[34]. Furthermore, creating an inclusive and culturally aware atmosphere can develop a sense of belonging while also encouraging open communication about mental health concerns.

Educational institutions can establish effective measures to assist all students' psychological well-being by getting a thorough grasp of the complex interplay of family environment, socioeconomic status, and cultural influences (Biglan A, Flay BR, Embry DD, Sandler IN. (2012)[35]. This comprehensive strategy may ensure that every kid, regardless of family background or circumstances, has an equal opportunity to excel intellectually and personally.

The primary goal of this dissertation is to perform a thorough investigation and study of the complex and multifaceted relationship between the family environment and the emergence of psychological problems in college students. This study aims to shed light on the intricate ways in which various dimensions of the family environment influence or alleviate psychological disturbances experienced by college students by conducting a thorough examination of existing literature, empirical research studies, and relevant theoretical frameworks.

The study has focused on the subtle roles played by several aspects of the family environment, such as cohesion, expressiveness, conflict, acceptance and care, active recreational orientation, independence, organization, and control. By analysing and examining these various characteristics, the study aims to find out how each factor contributes to or mitigates the development and perpetuation of psychological problems among college students.

The cohesiveness aspect will look into the level of emotional bonding, support, and unity within the family unit, as well as how these factors influence a student's resilience and psychological well-being during the transitional college years. Expressiveness will investigate how much family members are encouraged to openly express their views, feelings, and emotions, and how this dynamic affects a student's capacity to communicate successfully and manage with difficulties. Furthermore, the study will look into the impact of conflict in the family setting, assessing how the presence or absence of disagreements, violence, and hostility among family members affects a student's mental health and capacity to navigate the demands of college life. The aspects of acceptance and compassion will be examined to better understand how a nurturing and supportive family environment can instil in students a feeling of self-worth, confidence, and resilience, thereby protecting them from psychological discomfort.

The study has also focused on the effect of active recreational orientation, assessing how shared interests, hobbies, and leisure activities within the family unit affect a student's overall well-being and ability to manage stress. Independence will be investigated to determine how cultivating autonomy and decision-making abilities in the family setting can help students handle the obstacles of college life with greater confidence and self-reliance.

Furthermore, the study will look at the impact of organization and structure in the family environment, specifically how well-defined roles, responsibilities, and routines can provide a sense of stability and predictability, potentially mitigating psychological disturbances among

college students. Finally, the issue of control will be investigated, namely how excessive parental control, or lack thereof, affects a student's capacity to adapt to the greater independence and decision-making demands of college life.

By conducting a thorough examination of these various aspects of the family environment, this dissertation aims to add to the existing body of knowledge and provide valuable insights into the complex interplay between familial dynamics and psychological disturbances experienced by college students. The findings of this study have the potential to inform the development of tailored support systems, intervention strategies, and preventive measures aimed at creating a healthier and more supportive environment for students, thereby improving their overall well-being and academic success.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The role of family environment in psychological disturbances in college students is one of the important and rapidly developing topics in psychology and mental health. A review of the literature helps one comprehend the research issue under consideration. As academics continue to examine the intricate interactions between college students' mental health and their family environment, this topic has grown and developed significantly over time. Some relevant literature has been examined to understand the nature of existing literature regarding the role of family environment in a student's life.

Pankhuri Aggarwal (2023)[36] conducted a study titled "A Concurrent and Longitudinal Examination of Interpersonal Relations and Depressive Symptoms Among Young Adults in India". This study examined the cross-sectional and longitudinal (after six months) associations between poor quality of interpersonal relations (lower support and depth, higher conflict) with parents and other family members (e.g., sibling, grandparent) and youth depressive symptoms among urban, educated, young adults in India. Study also examined the moderating effects of inclusion of others in one's definition of self and lack of family cohesion with parents because of COVID-19 pandemic in the association between poor quality of interpersonal relations and depressive symptoms. Study found that **poor quality connections** with diverse **family members**, including mothers, fathers, and other relatives, were consistently associated with **higher levels of depression** symptoms.

Feng et al., (2023)[37] conducted a study titled "Network Analysis of Social Support and Anxiety Dimensions Among College Students". This study explored the relationship between anxiety symptoms among college students and perceived social support, focusing on the protective role of family support and the negative impacts of friends and other support. They found that Perceived social support was significantly associated with **anxiety symptoms**. Bridge

centrality research found that, in both networks, **family support** had **negative** bridge expected influence values, but **friend and other support** had **positive** bridge expected influences.

Weeden, Laci Leggitt. (2022)[38] conducted a study titled "college students' perceptions of parent involvement, self-reported well-being, and the relationship between them" This study examined college students' perceptions of their parents' involvement, how well they were doing, and whether or not there was a relationship between the two. This study also showed a strong **positive correlation** between reported **well-being** and perceived **parental involvement**. Male participants reported higher levels of positive self-reported well-being among the participants.

Aklilu A. Adare, Yuewen Zhang, Yaqi Hu Zhenhong Wang (2021)[39] conducted a study titled "Relationship Between Parental Marital Conflict and Social Anxiety Symptoms of Chinese College Students: Mediation Effect of Attachment". This study investigated how college students frequently struggle with social anxiety, which negatively affects their ability to adjust. They found a **negative correlation** between perceived **conflict and peer attachment**, and a **positive correlation** between **social anxiety symptoms and conflict**. Social support was also found to be negatively correlated with attachment.

Dhanashree Sowani and Anagha Lavalekar (2020)[40] conducted a study titled "Exploring psychological well-being of college students in Maharashtrian relation to their family environment". This study investigated the relationship between college students' family environments and psychological well-being. The Family Environment Scale by Dr. Bhatiya and Chaddha and Carol Ryff's Psychological Well-Being Scale were the instruments used in this study. The relationship between psychological well-being and the family environment varies significantly between childhood and young adulthood, according to multiple regression

analysis. College students' **psychological well-being** was found to be **negatively correlated** with **family environment aspects**.

Micha Blake Berryhill & Jessica Smith (2020)[41] conducted a study titled "College Student Chaotically-Disengaged Family Functioning, Depression, and Anxiety: The Indirect Effects of Positive Family Communication and Self-Compassion". This study aimed to investigate whether gender influenced the relationships between anxiety and depression levels, self-compassion, family communication, and college student family functioning. Positive communication and self-compassion have been found to have **significant negative impacts** on **the correlation** between **chaotically disengaged family functioning** and **depression and anxiety** in females exclusively.

M. Blake Berryhill, Christian Harless, and Paige Kean (2018)[42] conducted a study titled "College Student Cohesive-Flexible Family Functioning and Mental Health: Examining Gender Differences and the Mediation Effects of Positive Family Communication and Self-Compassion". This study investigated whether self-compassion and good family communication mediated the relationship between anxiety and depression and college students' perceptions of cohesive-flexible family functioning. The result indicated a **positive correlation** between **cohesive-flexible family functioning** and **constructive family communication**.

Defauw et al., (2018)[43] conducted a study on the topic "Families' Support and Influence on College Students' Educational Performance" This research study explored on identifying educational outcomes for students whose families are involved in their spiritual, social, financial and emotional needs. Students valued their parents' spiritual involvement and considered it a significant part of their daily lives. The study found that this **strongly correlates** with **students' academic success**, including **hardiness and spiritual happiness**. Although **some students** indicated that their **parents backed off** to give them **independence** and did not

provide support, they were still involved but kept their distance. Participants indicated that family involvement is a necessity for educational success.

Kolak, A.M., Van Wade, C.L., Ross (2018)[44] conducted a study titled "Family unpredictability and psychological distress in early adulthood: The role of family closeness and coping mechanisms". Study examined **unpredictability** within the **family environment** has been consistently **linked to anxiety and depressive** symptomology in early adulthood. They also found that both individual and family factors frequently shield college students from the possibly negative consequences of growing up in an unorganized home.

Kahn et al., (2017)[45] conducted a study titled "Stress, Depression, and Anxiety Among Transitioning College Students: The Family as a Protective Factor" this study determine how Stress associated with the college transition can bring about depression and anxiety symptoms, but family relationships can reduce the impact of stress. Regression analyses revealed that the **relationship between transition-related stress** and **depression** was most important when students had **significant attachment anxiety** (i.e., fear of rejection), **did not discuss their issues**, and had **poor family support**. Family support reduced anxiety, while high attachment avoidance (fear of dependency) was linked to a higher relationship between stress and anxiety.

Panda, Satyananda (2016)[46] conducted a study titled "Depression among undergraduate college students in relation to their family environment. This study determines how depression among undergraduate college students related to various aspects of their familial environment. This study also examined differences in depression and several aspects of the family environment between male and female college students. They concluded that the reasons can be different, but they are mainly related to family problems affecting young people. Also, **lack of communication** between children and parents can **cause depression,** because the child

cannot say what is happening in his life. More cohesive families create better bonds between family members and lead to less depression.

Sara M. Levens, Farrah Elrahal and Sara J. Sagui (2016)[47] conducted a study on the topic **"**The Role of Family Support and Perceived Stress Reactivity in Predicting Depression in College Freshman". This study examined how family support minimizes the association between depression and perceived stress reactivity in college students. Moderated regression analyses revealed that when perceived stress reactivity is low, **family emotional support significantly protects against depressive symptoms**. Findings suggest that involving family in the college transition to increase emotional support for students beginning college may help protect against depression symptomatology.

Yunmiao Yu, et. Al., (2015)[48] conducted a study titled "The Role of Family Environment in Depressive Symptoms among University Students: A Large Sample Survey in China". This study explored the relationship between family environment and depressive symptoms and to evaluate the influence of hard and soft family environmental factors on depression levels in a large sample of university students in China. Conducted on 6000 participants using Beck depression inventory BDI and family environment scale (FES Chinese version). **11.5% students** were found to have **moderate level depression**. Study found that the **family environmental factor** such as parent relationship, family economic status, level of parental literacy and non-intact family structure were **positively associated** with development of **depressive symptoms**. **Cohesion, conflict and control** was **negatively related to depression**.

Kaur, Malkeet Dhillon, Shamshir Singh Kaur, Ranjit (2015)[49] conducted a study titled "A study of relationship of Family environment with Mental Health of Adolescents of Sirsa district". This study investigated how teenage mental health in the Sirsa district is related to family environments. The adolescents' mental health was evaluated using Dr. Parmod Kumar's

Mental Health Check List and their family environment was evaluated using the Family Environment Scale developed by Dr. Harpreet Bhatia and N.K. Chadha. The results of this study found **positive correlation** between the **family environment** and **adolescents' mental health.**

Yacoub Khallad, Fares Jabr (2015)[50] conducted a study titled "Effects of perceived social support and family demands on college students' mental well-being: A cross-cultural investigation". This study explored the impact of family expectations and perceived social support on Jordanian and Turkish college students' mental health (perceived stress and depression). The study examined deeper awareness of the connection between college students' mental health and social support, and they highlighted the importance of certain contextual and cultural factors. Study found that there were **strong negative correlations** between **perceived support and mental well-being.**

Sax, L. J., & Weintraub, D. S. (2014)[51] conducted a study titled "Exploring the Parental Role in First-Year Students' Emotional Well-Being: Considerations by Gender". This study explored how student-parent communications during the first year of college differ based on gender and how these interactions may affect students' emotional wellbeing. The result also showed that both the quantity and quality of interaction are important for students, male and female. Moreover, mothers play a different role than fathers do, which is a significant addition to the current literature that primarily views parents as a unit. Students who **communicate more often** with mothers report **strong emotional support**, whereas men and women's desire for more communication with fathers was linked to declines in emotional well-being.

Talukdar, Rita Rani; Goswami, Kakali (2013)[52] conducted a study titled "The family environment as the predictor of psychological well-being among postgraduate students in Assam". This study investigated the relationship between psychological well-being and the

family environment, as well as how these factors relate to psychological well-being in Assam's postgraduate students. A student's psychological health is crucial to their ability to perform better in life. Their mental health is significantly influenced by their family environment as well. Positive life outcomes for students are correlated with their family environment and psychological well-being. Standardized psychological tests were utilized to measure the psychological constructs in the study, including the Family Environment Scale developed by Bhatia and Chadha (1996) and the Psychological Well-Being Scale developed by Carol Ryff (1995). The findings demonstrated the importance of the family environment as an important factor in psychological well-being. They also found that there is a **significant relationship** between **students' psychological health** and their **family environment**.

Jennifer Metheny and Ellen Hawley McWhirter (2013)[53] conducted a study titled "Contributions of Social Status and Family Support to College Students' Career Decision Self-Efficacy and Outcome Expectations". This study discovered that young adults in college need to better understand the roles of social status and family support in their career decisions. This study found that both **family status and family support** are associated with s**ocial-cognitive career development outcomes.**

Treniece Lewis Harris, Sherry Davis Molock (2010)[54] conducted a study titled "Cultural Orientation, Family Cohesion, and Family Support in Suicide Ideation and Depression among African American College Students". This study examined African American college students' suicidal thoughts and depression in relation to communalism, family cohesiveness, and family support. Findings indicated a **positive correlation** between **communalism, family support, and family cohesion**. **Lower levels of depression and suicidal thoughts** were linked to **higher levels of family cohesiveness and support**.

Silva, Marc; Dorso, Erin; Azhar, Aisha; Renk, Kimberly (2007)[55] conducted a study titled "The Relationship Among Parenting Styles Experienced During Childhood, Anxiety, Motivation, and Academic Success in College Students". This study looked at the connections between college students' anxiety, motivation, and academic success as measured by their grade point averages in high school and college, and the parenting styles they had as children. The Parental Authority Questionnaire, the Manifest Anxiety Scale, and the Motivation to Achieve Academically Questionnaire are the instruments used in this study. The results indicated that **the anxiety levels** of **college students** were **associated with decreases** when f**athers provided authoritative parenting,** while **increases were associated with mother-provided authoritarian parenting**. Additionally, the grade point averages of college students were correlated with the authoritative and authoritarian parenting styles of mothers and fathers, as well as the anxiety and motivation of the students. Furthermore, the motivation of college students acted as a mediator in the relationship between their anxiety and grade point averages.

José B. Torres, V.Scott Solberg (2001)[56] conducted a study titled "Role of Self-Efficacy, Stress, Social Integration, and Family Support in Latino College Student Persistence and Health". This study investigated the relationship between higher college self-efficacy and both stronger persistence intentions and improved health in an indirect manner. Faculty and social integration were positively connected with self-efficacy, but persistence intentions and faculty and social integration were not. Those students who reported having **more family support** also had **higher levels of self-efficacy**.

Charles J. Holahan, David P. Valentiner & Rudolf H. Moos (1995)[57] conducted a study titled "Parental support, coping strategies, and psychological adjustment: An integrative model with late adolescents". The study investigated the relationships between late adolescent psychological adjustment, adaptive coping strategies, and parental support using an integrative

predictive model. The study found that **teenagers** who had **more parental support** were **less stressed** and more **well-adjusted** than those who had less support.

Conclusion: A thorough examination of the research on the association between family dynamics and college students' mental well-being finds a consistent pattern of results. Various studies have found that family support is an important component in reducing symptoms of depression, anxiety, and stress in young adults. Positive family communication, coherence, and involvement are consistently linked to better mental health outcomes, whereas conflict, lack of support, and disengagement in the family context likely to increase psychological suffering. Furthermore, the quality of connections with parents and other family members has a considerable influence on college students' depressive symptoms and anxiety levels. Cultural elements such as communalism and family bonding influence mental health outcomes. Thus, these findings emphasize the necessity of creating supportive and communicative family contexts to boost college students' well-being during the transition to early adulthood.

GAP ANALYSIS

Research on the impact of family dynamics on college students' psychological well-being has mostly concentrated on Western contexts, neglecting the unique familial structures and cultural norms that exist in northern India. In this region, which has a collectivist culture, the family unit is crucial to developing individual identities and giving support throughout life. However, there is a significant lack of research into the impact of family dynamics on the mental health of college students as they move to adulthood. Despite the recognized importance of familial relationships during adolescence, less attention has been paid to understanding how factors such as family conflict, dysfunctional communication patterns, or a lack of emotional support may contribute to psychological disturbances in this population.

The cultural background of northern India provides a unique setting for investigating the relationship between household influences and college students' psychological well-being. Individualistic civilizations promote freedom and autonomy, whereas collectivist cultures prioritize cooperation and harmony within familial networks. As a result, the family's involvement in giving emotional support, advice, and a sense of belonging may be especially strong during the early years of higher study. However, the extent to which family dynamics contribute to or improve psychological problems among college students is unknown in this cultural setting.

This study aims to fill this gap by undertaking a thorough analysis into the association between family dynamics and psychological well-being among college students in northern India. By investigating characteristics such as family conflict, communication patterns, and emotional support within the familial setting, we hope to uncover the particular processes by which these dynamics influence students' mental health outcomes. Furthermore, by contextualizing our findings within the cultural framework of northern India, we hope to highlight the family's unique role in influencing individuals' experiences as they move to adulthood. Finally, we hope to provide useful insights that can guide targeted interventions aimed at resolving the personal and intellectual obstacles that college students confront in this cultural context.

RESEARCH QUESTION

- "What is the role of family environment in contributing to psychological disturbances among college students?
- Is there gender difference on psychological disturbances due to poor family environment?

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

AIM:

The aim is to study the role of family environment in psychological disturbances among college students.

OBJECTIVES:

1. To assess the dynamics of family environment among college going students
2. To assess the level of psychological disturbances (depression, stress and anxiety) among college going students.
3. To correlate the family environment with psychological disturbances (depression, stress and anxiety) among college going students.
4. To assess the gender difference among college going students on family environment and psychological disturbances (depression, stress and anxiety).

MATERIAL AND METHODS

A research methodology offers an in-depth overview of the study, detailing its design, the methods used for sampling and strategy implementation, the anticipated outcomes that would support the study's findings, and the considerations that have been made.

HYPOTHESIS

a) There will be significant findings on dynamics of family environment among college going students.
b) There will be significant psychological disturbances (depression, stress and anxiety) among college going students.
c) There will be correlation among the family environment with psychological disturbances (depression, stress and anxiety) among college going students.
d) There will be significant gender difference among college going students on family environment and psychological disturbances (depression, stress and anxiety).

NULL HYPOTHESIS

a) There will be no significant findings on dynamics of family environment among college going students.
b) There will be no significant psychological disturbances (depression, stress and anxiety) among college students.
c) There will be no significant correlation among the family environment with psychological disturbances (depression, stress and anxiety) among college going students.
d) There will be no significant gender difference among college going students on family environment and psychological disturbances (depression, stress and anxiety).

STUDY DESIGN

This study is Cross-sectional and it designed to explore and compare college students.

SAMPLING TECHNIQUE

The sampling technique use to conduct this study was purposive sampling.

SAMPLE SIZE

This study included 100 college students, 50 of whom were male and 50 were female. The distribution of the entire sample illustrates in the table 1 below.

Table 1 shows the distribution of the total sample of male and female (N=100)

Population (college students)	**N = 100**
Male	**50**
Female	**50**

PLACE OF STUDY

Places from data has been collected from i.e., Shri Harbans Lal Miglani Group of Institute and Mahanand Mission Harijan College, Ghaziabad.

TIME PERIOD

Data has been collected after gaining ethical clearance from the Santosh deemed to be university. Duration of data collection is 2 months between February 2024- April 2024.

INCLUSIVE CRITERIA

1. Student's whose age is between 18-25 years for both male and female.
2. Individuals who are willing to participate.

3. Student who are living with their parents.

EXCLUSIVE CRITERIA

1. Students who are living in hostels will be excluded
2. Students who are having physical disabilities and psychiatric disorders will be excluded

MEASURES

1. Depression Anxiety and Stress Scale-42 (DASS-42)

The DASS-42 was developed by Lovibond and Lovibond (1995)[58]. The DASS-42 is a 42 item self-report scale designed to measure the negative emotional states of depression, anxiety and stress. It is the long version of the DASS-21. It was developed by the Psychology Foundation of Australia. Each domain assesses the negative emotional symptoms on a four-point Likert scale.

The principal value of the DASS in a clinical setting is to clarify the locus of emotional disturbance. The DASS is based on a dimensional rather than a categorical conception of psychological distress, and scores emphasise the degree to which someone is experiencing symptoms rather than diagnostic cutoff points. Validity (0.65) and Cronbach's alpha for depression, anxiety, and stress were 0.96, 0.89 and 0.93 for each component respectively.

2. Family Environment Scale (FES)

Bhatia and Chadha (1993)[59] developed the Family Environment Scale based on Moos' (1986)[60] initial scale. This adaption includes three dimensions inspired by Moos' work, with variations on the sub-scales within each dimension. The first dimension is **relationship**, which includes

Cohesion (Rel. 0.92), **Expressiveness** (Rel. 0.88), **Conflict** (Rel. 0.84), and **Acceptance and Caring** (Rel. 0.86). **Cohesion** analyses the level of commitment, guidance, and support among family members, whereas **Expressiveness** assesses the amount to which feelings and opinions are freely shared. **Conflict** denotes the level of openly stated aggressiveness and conflict within the family, whereas **Acceptance and care** measures the extent of unconditional acceptance and care between members. The second dimension is **personal growth**, which includes **Independence** (Rel. 0.70) and **Active Recreational Orientation** (Rel. 0.48). **Independence** assesses family members' strong decision-making abilities, whereas **Active Recreational Orientation** assesses engagement in social and recreational activities. The third dimension, **system maintenance**, includes **Organization** (Rel. 0.75), and **Control** (Rel. 0.48). **Organization** examines the significance of a defined organizational structure in organizing family activities and obligations, whereas **Control** assesses the level of limit-setting within the family. The measure consists of 69 items created for people aged 17 to 50, with both positive and negative comments scored on a five-point Likert scale (strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, strongly disagree). Overall, the scale demonstrates high reliability (0.95) and validity (0.75).

STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

The data has been analysed using Microsoft Excel and SPSS-23, employing three key statistical techniques: mean, t-test, and correlation analysis.

The mean is a fundamental measure of central tendency that provides a concise summary of the typical or average value in a dataset. Calculating the mean helps understand the central point around which the data is distributed, which is essential for accurately describing and interpreting the data.

The t-test is a powerful statistical tool employed to compare the means of two groups or samples. In this research, the t-test was used to determine if the difference between the means of the groups under study is statistically significant. This analysis is crucial for assessing the effect of the independent variable(s) on the dependent variable(s) and testing the hypotheses.

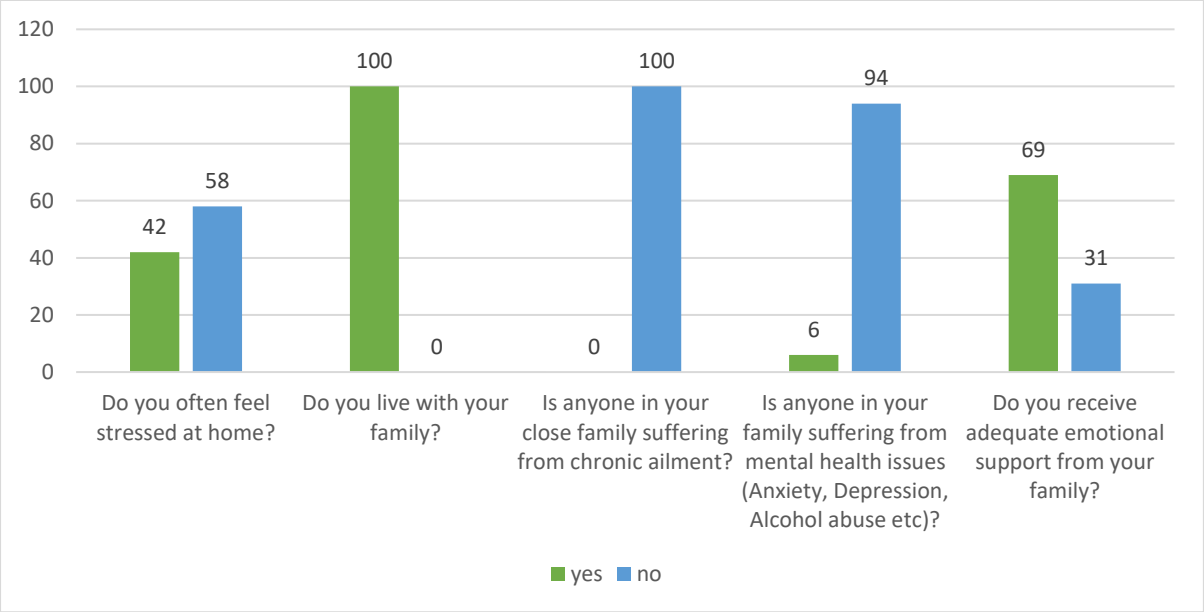
Correlation analysis is a valuable technique for exploring the relationship between two continuous variables. This analysis was utilized to quantify the strength and direction of the linear association between various factors in the study. Correlation analysis provided insights into the potential causal or predictive relationships among the variables under investigation.

By employing these statistical analyses – mean, t-test, and correlation – the data could be comprehensively described, comparisons between groups could be made, and meaningful patterns and relationships within the variables of interest could be uncovered. These analyses formed the backbone of the data analysis approach, allowing well-supported conclusions to be drawn and contributing to the existing knowledge in the field of study.

RESULTS

In this following chapter, the study's findings are methodically documented, giving light on the outcomes of detailed data analysis that is aligned with the research objectives. Using rigorous statistical tools and analysis, this part presents significant discoveries made at various stages of the inquiry. With a participant pool of 100 students, evenly divided between male and female students, the impacts of this deep examination of the data are investigated. Some personal question was asked from the students which shows in the graph below.

Graph 1 showing distribution of responses on the question ask in preliminary information form.



All of the major questions addressed various aspects of familial relations and psychological well-being. The data show that a sizable majority of respondents reported feeling pressured at home, with 42% confirming this sentiment. Notably, all respondents reported living with their families, implying a strong familial structure in the sample. Furthermore, no one reported having a family member with a chronic illness, and only 6% acknowledged the presence of mental health difficulties in their family.

When assessing the provision of emotional support within the familial setting, the findings show that the majority (69%) of respondents believe they receive appropriate emotional support from their family members. In contrast, a sizable minority (31%) reported insufficient emotional support, signalling potential gaps in familial support systems.

These findings illustrate the complex interplay between familial ties and individual well-being, emphasizing the need for additional research and potential treatments to strengthen familial support networks and reduce stressors in the home environment.

Table no. 2 showing mean score on different variables of FES and DASS 42 in overall population, male and female and t-test score between male and female.

Variables	Overall mean & S.D.	Mean (male) & S.D.	Mean (female) & S.D.	T test (btw male & female)
FES: COHESION SCORE	45.73 ±7.30	47.74 ±7.58	43.72 ±6.48	2.848
FES: EXPRESSIVENESS SCORE	28.2 ±5.89	27.82 ±4.79	28.58 ±6.85	-0.642
FES: CONFLICT SCORE	38.03 ±5.02	38.54 ±6.06	37.52 ±3.69	1.015
FES: ACCEPTANCE AND CARING SCORE	38.59 ±5.13	39.24 ±5.89	37.94 ±4.21	1.269
FES: INDEPENDENCE SCORE	27.71 ±3.99	27.48 ±4.39	27.94 ±3.57	-0.574
FES: ACTIVE - RECREATIONAL ORIENTATION SCORE	25.51 ±4.11	25.98 ±4.68	25.04 ±3.42	1.145

FES: ORGANIZATION SCORE	7.05 ±1.73	7.38 ±1.70	6.72 ±1.71	1.932
FES: CONTROL SCORE	13.26 ±2.68	14.28 ±2.76	12.24 ±2.19	4.084
DEPRESSION SCORE	16.24 ±8.14	14.96 ±9.02	17.52 ±7.01	-1.584
ANXIETY SCORE	15.92 ±8.16	15.08 ±9.61	16.76 ±6.37	-1.029
STRESS SCORE	16.88 ±7.66	15.94 ±8.73	17.82 ±6.35	-1.23

Table 1 is showing an overview of the family's environment as well as the mental health status of its members. The Family Environment Scale (FES) scores indicate that the family has a strong sense of cohesion (45.73), implying a high level of emotional bonding and support among family members. The expressiveness score (28.2) is moderate, indicating that family members are encouraged to express their emotions and thoughts openly. However, the conflict score (38.03) is slightly higher, suggesting that there is some openly expressed anger, aggression, and conflict within the family.

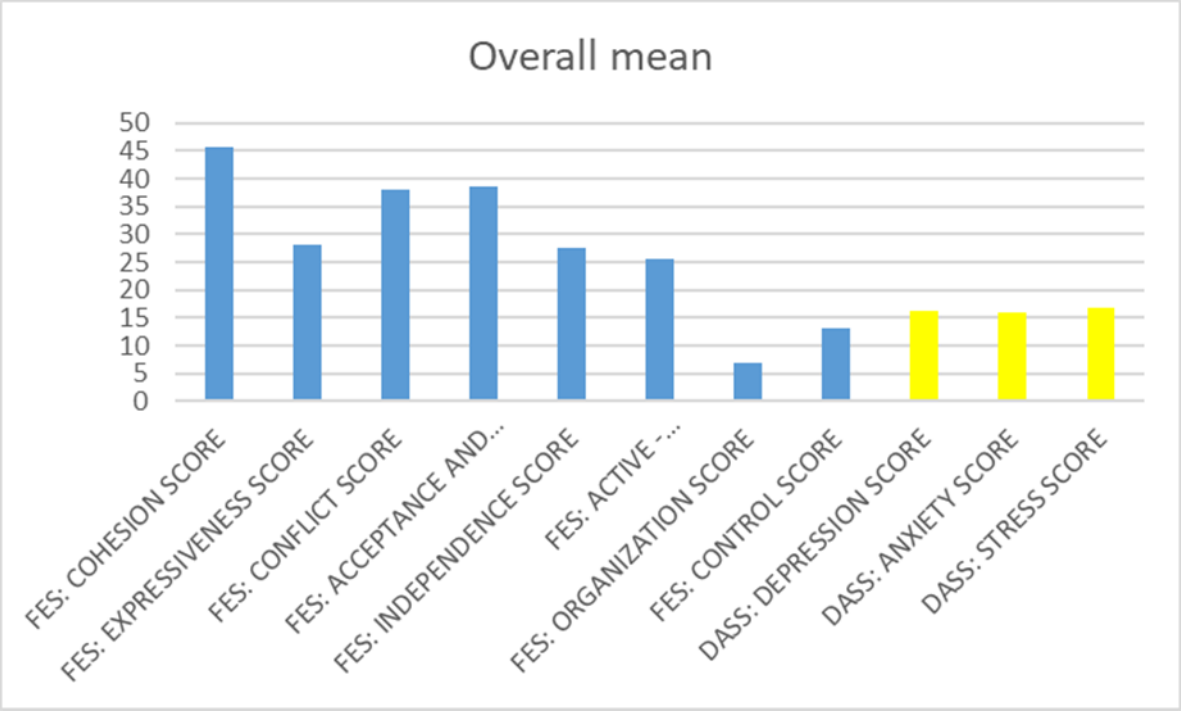
The acceptance and caring score (38.59) are moderate, indicating that family members provide reasonable support and care for one another. The independence score (27.71) is also moderate, indicating that family members are assertive and self-sufficient. The active-recreational orientation score (25.51) is low, implying that the family does not frequently participate in social and recreational activities together. The low organization score (7.05) indicates that the family may not prioritize clear organization and structure when planning family activities and

responsibilities. Similarly, the control score (13.26) is low, implying that the family follows a less rigid set of rules and procedures for managing family life.

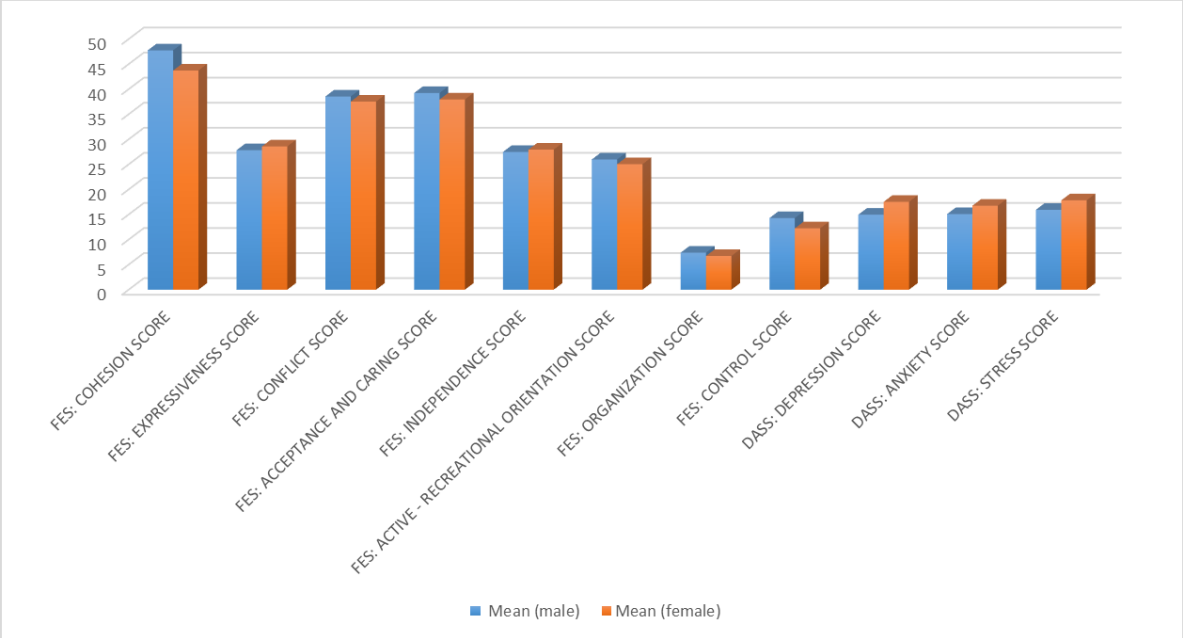
The depression score (16.24), anxiety score (15.92), and stress score (16.88) all indicate that family members have mild to moderate mental health concerns.

Therefore, while the family demonstrates strong emotional bonding and support, there are some areas that could be improved. The slightly higher conflict score and lower levels of organization, control, and participation in joint recreational activities indicate that the family could improve communication, reduce conflict, and engage in more shared activities. Furthermore, treating mild to moderate levels of depression, anxiety, and stress in family members may benefit their overall well-being and family functioning. By focusing on these areas, the family may utilize their existing strengths and foster a more harmonious and supportive environment.

Graph-1 Showing mean score of FES and DASS in overall population (N=100).



Graph 2 Showing the gender differences (male/female) among college going students on family environment and psychological issues.



Graph 2 is showing that, in the family environment, males has scored higher on cohesion, expressiveness, and acceptance/caring than females. This implies that males perceive their family relationships as closer, more open in expression, and more caring than females do.

On average, females reported higher independence scores. This suggests that females see their families as giving them more autonomy and self-sufficiency.

Males had higher active-recreational orientation, organization, and control scores. This demonstrates that males see their families as more active, structured, and controlling than females do.

In (DASS) On average, females reported higher levels of depression, anxiety, and stress than men. The mean scores for depression and stress are moderate, while those for anxiety are mild.

For stress alone, males' mean DASS scores were in the moderate severity range. Their depression and anxiety scores were mild.

Therefore, gender differences emerged in perceptions of family dynamics and mental health outcomes. Females have a less positive outlook on family relationships and report poorer mental health. Based on these findings, targeted support for females in terms of family and mental well-being may be appropriate. In order to explore association between FES and DASS 42, correlation has been calculated which is mentioned in the table below.

Table – 3 showing the corelation between FES: Subscales and DASS-42.

Variables	**Depression**	**Anxiety**	**Stress**
FES: COHESION SCORE	-.329**	-.324**	-.251*
FES: EXPRESSIVENESS SCORE	-.246*	-.199*	-.233*
FES: CONFLICT SCORE	-.323**	-.306**	-.343**
FES: ACCEPTANCE AND CARING SCORE	-.394**	-.397**	-.353**
FES: INDEPENDENCE SCORE	-.230*	-0.149	-0.171
FES: ACTIVE – RECREATIONAL ORIENTATION SCORE	-.245*	-0.196	-0.15
FES: ORGANIZATION SCORE	-.277**	-.220*	-.300**
FES: CONTROL SCORE	-.350**	-.212*	-.246*

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The correlation analysis showed that all FES subscale scores were significantly negatively correlated with depression, anxiety, and stress scores. This suggests that participants who had

a more positive perception of their family environment (higher cohesion, expressiveness, acceptance, etc.) indicated less negative mental health symptoms in terms of depression, anxiety and stress.

Depression scores highlight strongest negative correlations with FES Acceptance and Caring (r=-.394), Control (r=-.350), and Conflict (r=-.323) subscales. This suggests that participants who saw their families as more caring, providing appropriate autonomy/control, and being less conflictual reported fewer depressive symptoms.

Anxiety also highlights most strongly negatively associated with Acceptance and Caring (r=-.397), Cohesion (r=-.324), and Conflict (r=-.306). Perceiving one's family as more caring and closer, as well as less conflictual, is associated with fewer anxiety symptoms, similar to depression.

Finally, stress scores highlight strongest correlations with conflict (r=-.343), acceptance and caring (r=-.353), and organization (r=-.300). This suggests that viewing one's family as less conflictual, caring, and organized is linked to lower stress levels.

DISCUSSION

The current study aimed to explore the impact of the family environment among college students in terms of vulnerability to develop psychological disturbances specifically depression, anxiety, and stress. In addition, the study looked into gender differences in college students' perceptions of their family environment and psychological well-being.

The study of familial relationships and their impact on psychological well-being provided significant findings. There are some general questions that has been asked from the entire sample and their responses are discussed for better insight.

Firstly, 42% of respondents reported feeling stressed at home, indicating that a large number of students experience stress in their homes. This means that, while the home is frequently considered as a haven of security, it can also be a cause of stress for many students.

Second, the findings show that all respondents live with their families, implying a strong family-centred living situation among the participants. This study highlights the role of family in respondents' lives, giving context to their experiences and support systems.

Third, while no one reported chronic illnesses among their immediate family members. A significant 94% reported no mental health difficulties such as anxiety, depression, or alcoholism, while 6% of them were showing mental health issues (anxiety, depression, alcohol abuse etc.). This statistic emphasizes the prevalence of mental health issues within families, indicating a possible area for intervention and support.

Lastly, 69% of respondents believe they receive appropriate emotional support from their families. While this majority may appear encouraging, it is important to note that 31% do not feel appropriately supported. This emphasizes the significance of developing healthy familial

relationships and filling potential gaps in emotional support systems. The findings show a complicated interplay between stress, family dynamics, and emotional support.

In this study, it was attempted to establish the negative impact of family environment on psychological health of college students by analysing scores of students of FES and DASS. The analysis of the FES questionnaire revealed a complex picture of family dynamics with different coherence, expressiveness, acceptance/caring, independence, conflict, active-recreational orientation, organization, and control in connection to relationship, personal growth, and system management. Following the analysis of the FES questionnaire which revealed insights into family dynamics the discussion now shifts to establish proposed hypothesis according to the findings.

Null Hypothesis 1 states that "There will be no significant findings on the dynamics of the family environment among college-going students."

The FES questionnaire was used to analyse the dynamics of family environment on different variables in which the findings shows that family **cohesion**, an essential aspect in harmony, had a moderate mean score of 45.73 (±7.30) across all participants (N=100). This indicates that, on average, college students report a moderate level of cohesion among their families. This consistent with previous research findings Aydin B, Oztutuncu F (2001)[61] was found that the family cohesion was associated with negative thoughts and depressive mood. Participants reported a moderate level of **expressiveness** in the family setting, with a mean score of 28.2 (±5.89) which indicate moderate level of open communication of feelings and thoughts between family members. Elmer LD. (2000)[62] Study found that participants reported a moderate level of expressiveness in the family setting.

College students reported a moderate level of **conflict** with their families, with a mean score of 38.03 (±5.02). Study found that there was some openly expressed anger, aggressiveness, and

conflict among the individuals' households. This could potentially upset family dynamics, resulting in a less peaceful setting (Nomura N, Noguchi Y, Saito S, Tezuka I. (1995)[63]. **Acceptance and caring** in the home setting are crucial for creating a supportive environment, with a mean score of 38.59 (±5.13) indicating moderate levels of acceptance and caring among participants. Similar findings were reported by Joshi S. (2017)[64] as he found that family members provided reasonable support and care to one another. College students scored a mean of 27.71 (±3.99) for perceived **independence**, which is important for personal growth within the family unit. This indicates moderate levels of independence which suggests that family members were encouraged to be assertive and self-sufficient to some level, but not to an excessive degree (Rana N, Kapoor S. (2017)[65]. The family's focus on **active and recreational** activities resulted in a moderate mean score of 25.51 (±4.11). Findings indicates that the families did not commonly engage in social and recreational activities together, which may have influenced their bonding and shared experiences (Madan N. (2019)[66].

College students had scored overall mean score of 7.05 (±1.73) for family **organization**, indicating moderate level of structure in their family environment. Families may not have prioritized clear organization and structure when organizing family activities and tasks, which could lead to disorganization and confusion (Patil AP, Adsul RK. (2018)[67]. The family **control** scale had a mean score of 13.26 (±2.68), indicating moderate levels of perceived control in the family setting. Similar findings were reported that the families used a less rigorous set of norms and procedures to manage family life, which might be interpreted positively (allowing for greater flexibility) or negatively (lack of structure and boundaries) (Bhonsle KA, Nagamani K. (2015)[68].

Therefore, Null Hypothesis Number 1, which predicted that there would be no significant differences in family dynamics among college students, is rejected. The data analysis found that college students have moderate levels of cohesion, expressiveness, conflict, acceptance, independence, recreational orientation, organization, and control in their family environment. According to expectations, our findings show that there are significant differences in family dynamics within the sample. **Thus, the null hypothesis is rejected which leads to accept alternative hypothesis i.e., there is significant differences in family dynamics among college students.**

Null Hypothesis 2) There will be no significant psychological disturbances (depression, stress, and anxiety) among college-going students.

The findings show that college students have an average depression score of 16.24 (± 8.14), indicating moderately depressed symptoms. Ibrahim et al. (2013)[69] discovered comparable levels of depression among college students in a distinct cultural setting. Also, a study conducted by Auerbach et al. (2018)[70] found a significant prevalence of depression among college students worldwide, reinforcing the idea that depression is a frequent problem in this demographic.

The average anxiety score among college students is 15.92 ± 8.16, indicating moderate symptoms. This finding is consistent with previous study that found a considerable burden of worry among college students. Zivin et al. (2009)[71] found a significant incidence of anxiety symptoms among college students across time, indicating that anxiety is a common mental health concern in this population.

College students experience moderate stress, with a mean stress score of 16.88 ± 7.66. Dyrbye et al. (2010)[72] discovered that stress levels among medical students were much greater than in the general population, underscoring the unique pressures faced by college students.

Thus, the statistics indicate that college students have moderate levels of depression, anxiety, and stress, which is consistent with previous research findings. These psychological abnormalities can have a major impact on academic performance, mental health, and overall quality of life among college students. **Therefore, the null hypotheses are rejected which leads to accept alternative hypothesis i.e., there is significant psychological disturbances (depression, stress, and anxiety) among college-going students.**

Null Hypothesis 3) There will be a no correlation among the family environment with psychological disturbances (depression, stress, and anxiety) among college-going students.

The Family Environment Scale (FES) determined multiple aspects of familial dynamics, each with particular links to mental health parameters measured by the Depression, Anxiety, and Stress Scale (DASS). **Cohesiveness scores** have negative correlations of -.329** with depression, -.324** with anxiety, and -.251** with stress, implying that stronger emotional relationships within the family are related with lower levels of psychological discomfort. This is consistent with previous research indicating that a supportive and harmonious family environment can serve as a protective factor against mental health difficulties (MacLeod, 2019)[73]. **Expressiveness scores** have negative correlation with depression (-.246*), anxiety (-.199*), and stress (-.233*), emphasizing the need of open communication and emotional expression in addressing mental health difficulties. **Acceptance and caring scores** reveal negative correlations of -.394** with depression, -.397** with anxiety, and -.353** with stress,

emphasizing the role of familial warmth and support in buffering against negative psychological outcomes. **Conflict scores** demonstrate negative correlations of -.323** with depression, -.306** with anxiety, and -.343** with stress, suggesting that higher levels of familial discord are associated with elevated psychological distress. This research findings are supported by study done by Rai S. (2021)[74] found a significant negative association between the family environment scale's conflict aspect.

Additionally, **organization scores** display negative correlations of -.277** with depression, -.220* with anxiety, and -.300** with stress, indicating that structured and orderly family environments may contribute to lower levels of psychological distress. **Control scores** exhibit negative correlations of -.350** with depression, -.212* with anxiety, and -.246* with stress, emphasizing the importance of balanced parental control and clear boundaries in fostering mental well-being. This research findings are supported by Dhanashree Sowani and Anagha Lavalekar (2020)[40] found negative correlation of FES aspects of organization and control with DASS.

While variables like **independence and active-recreational orientation** show weaker correlations, they still contribute to our understanding of family dynamics and their impact on mental health. These findings underscore the intricate relationship between family environment and mental health outcomes, emphasizing the importance of fostering cohesion, open communication, acceptance, and supportive relationships within the family context. These data indicate that family relations indeed play a substantial role in determining college students' mental health. **Therefore, the null hypotheses are rejected which leads to accept alternative hypothesis i.e., there is correlation among family environment with psychological disturbances (depression, stress and anxiety) among college going students.**

Null Hypothesis 4) There will be no significant gender difference among college-going students on the family environment and psychological disturbances (depression, stress, and anxiety).

Cohesion: Males had a higher mean cohesion score (47.74) than females (43.72). The t-test result of 2.848 ($p < 0.05$) indicates a significant difference in family cohesion between males and females, with males scoring higher. This is aligned with Alonzo, D., Llamas, J., Narvaez, D., & Peterson, C. (2019)[75], who found gender differences in family cohesion but uneven effects on psychological well-being.

Expressiveness: Males had a slightly lower mean expressiveness score (27.82) than females (28.58). The t-test value of -0.642 ($p > 0.05$) shows that while females had slightly higher mean expressiveness scores, the difference was not statistically significant. This finding aligns with Khan, S. I., Khan, T. M., & Maalouf, F. T. (2017)[76], who found that females reported higher levels of expressiveness but no significant gender differences in home environment ratings.

Conflict: Male had a higher mean conflict score (38.54) than female (37.52). The t-test value of 1.015 ($p > 0.05$) indicated that males reported higher conflict scores; however, the difference was not statistically significant. This finding is similar with that of Alonzo, D., Llamas, J., Narvaez, D., & Peterson, C. (2019)[75], who observed gender-specific differences in family conflict but no significant impact on psychological well-being.

Acceptance and Caring: Males had higher scores (39.24) than females (37.94). With a t-test value of 1.269 ($p > 0.05$), there is no significant gender difference in acceptance and care within families. This finding supports Alonzo, D., Llamas, J., Narvaez, D., & Peterson, C. (2019)[75] research, which found gender-specific differences in perceived familial acceptance but no significant effects on psychological well-being.

Independence: Females had a slightly higher mean independence score (27.94) than males (27.48). The t-test result of -0.574 ($p > 0.05$) indicates that there is no significant gender difference in perceived independence within families. Females reported somewhat higher independence scores, while the difference was not statistically significant. This finding is consistent with Khan S. I., Khan, T. M., & Maalouf, F. T. (2017)[76], who discovered slight gender differences in home environment ratings but did not reveal substantial effects on psychological well-being.

Active-Recreational Orientation: Males had a higher mean active-recreational orientation score (25.98) than females (25.04), and a t-test result of 1.145 ($p > 0.05$) indicates no significant gender difference in active-recreational orientation among families. This is in line with Alonzo et al. (2019)[77], who discovered gender-specific differences in family activity orientation but found no significant effects on psychological well-being.

Organization: Males had a higher mean organization score (7.38) than females (6.72). A t-test result of 1.932 ($p > 0.05$) revealed no significant gender difference in the organization of family activities and duties. This finding is consistent with Khan S. I., Khan, T. M., & Maalouf, F. T. (2017)[76], who found gender-specific changes in family structure but no significant effects on psychological well-being.

Control: Males had a significantly higher mean control score (14.28) than females (12.24), as indicated by a t-test value of 4.084 ($p < 0.05$). Males perceived their families to having stronger norms and procedures for managing family life. This finding is consistent with Alonzo et al. (2019)[77], who discovered gender-specific disparities in family control but found no significant impact on psychological well-being.

Following data analysis, many characteristics of the family environment were assessed using the Family Environment Scale (FES) scores. Minor variations emerged between male and

female students in aspects such as cohesion, expressiveness, conflict, acceptance and care, independence, active-recreational orientation, organization, and control, but these differences were not statistically significant. This shows that male and female students experience their familial circumstances in similar ways. Alonzo et al. (2019)[77] discovered gender-specific differences in family cohesion but observed inconsistent impacts on psychological well-being.

Starting with depression, the data show that females had a higher mean depression score (17.52) than males (14.96). This shows that women suffered more severe depressed symptoms than men. This data is consistent with previous literature, Alonzo et al. (2019)[77] and Khan et al. (2017)[76] found greater levels of depression among female college students, supporting the theory that females are more sensitive to depressive symptoms during their college years.

Moving on to anxiety, the results show that females had a higher average anxiety score (16.76) than males (15.08). This suggests that females had more severe anxiety symptoms than males. Again, this is consistent with previous data indicating a higher frequency of anxiety disorders among females. Smith et al. (2018)[78] and Ibrahim et al. (2013)[69] found higher levels of anxiety among female college students, highlighting potential gender disparities in anxiety symptoms during the college years.

Females had a higher mean stress score (17.82) than males (15.94), indicating that they experienced more severe stress symptoms. This finding is consistent with previous studies that show increased stress levels among female college students. Wang and Sheikh-Khalil (2014)[79] and Dyrbye et al. (2010)[72] found gender inequalities in stress levels among college students, with females frequently reporting higher stress levels than males.

Therefore, the null hypothesis, which states that there are no significant gender differences in depression, anxiety, and stress among college students, is rejected. The findings clearly show that females have higher mean scores for depression, anxiety, and stress than males, indicating

major gender inequalities in psychological well-being during college. **Thus, based on the data, the null hypothesis is rejected which leads to accept alternative hypothesis i.e., there is significant gender differences among college going students on family environment and psychological disturbances (depression, anxiety and stress).**

In conclusion, the study found significant negative associations between family environment dynamics and psychological well-being among college students, with moderate levels of cohesion, expressiveness, and conflict influencing depression, anxiety, and stress. Also, gender inequalities were found, with female students reporting higher levels of psychological distress than male students. These findings underline the importance of focused interventions to improve family support systems and address gender-specific mental health concerns in college settings.

CONCLUSION

SUMMARY

The study looked into how the home environment affected college students' psychological well-being, including depression, anxiety, and stress, as well as gender disparities in these perceptions. A sizable majority of students reported experiencing stress at home, undermining the notion of the house as a safe haven and highlighting it as a possible stressor. This shows that, while family environments are important in students' lives, they may also be sources of severe stress. All respondents lived with their families, emphasizing the value of family bonds in their daily lives. Also, while the majority believed they received adequate emotional support from their families, a sizable number did not, indicating significant disparities in perceived emotional support.

The FES analysis provided a detailed picture of family dynamics among college students. The scores suggested moderate degrees of cohesion, expressiveness, and conflict within families. This implies a balance of harmony and open communication, as well as the presence of conflict, both of which can disturb family relations. Acceptance and compassion were both moderate, indicating a generally helpful environment with some restrictions. Independence within the family was rated moderately, indicating a balance between building independence and maintaining family togetherness. The active-recreational orientation score was lower, indicating that there was less participation in shared activities, which could have an impact on family bonding.

The organizational structure and control within families were modest, demonstrating a combination of flexibility and organization. The rejection of the null hypothesis for family dynamics reveals that there are considerable differences in how college students perceive and experience their family surroundings, which influences their psychological well-being.

CONCLUSION

The study found that the familial environment had a considerable impact on college students' psychological health, with different parts of family dynamics being strongly related to levels of depression, anxiety, and stress. Strong family cohesion, expressiveness, acceptance, and care were linked to reduced levels of psychological disturbances, implying that supportive and communicative family contexts can help reduce mental health problems. Higher levels of family conflict and disorganization, on the other hand, were linked to increased psychological distress, emphasizing the negative impact of familial strife and lack of structure. These findings highlight the importance of developing positive family interactions and environments to promote college students' mental health.

The study also found significant gender differences, with females reporting higher rates of depression, anxiety, and stress than males. Although males reported greater perceived control and conflict within families, these factors did not significantly reduce the higher levels of psychological suffering reported by females. These gender inequalities indicate that mental health interventions should be customized to the specific needs and experiences of female students. While supportive family dynamics are vital for all students, female students may require additional support systems and specific programs to effectively address their greater levels of psychological distress. This emphasizes the significance of creating gender-sensitive approaches in mental health services and family education programs to improve the well-being of all college students.

LIMITATIONS

The study's reliance on self-reported metrics has drawbacks, including the likelihood of response biases and mistakes. The use of cross-sectional data limits our capacity to determine causal and temporal links between family dynamics and psychological problems. Furthermore,

the sample size of 100 college students may not be typical of the overall population, limiting the data' generalizability. The study's focus on college students living with their parents may leave out people with non-traditional family structures or self-sufficient living arrangements, thus overlooking crucial distinctions in family dynamics and mental health outcomes. Furthermore, the study did not investigate other potential confounding variables such as socioeconomic level, cultural background, or prior mental health history, all of which could influence the association between family environment and psychological well-being. Future studies we can address the use of social media within families and students. Also, we should address these limitations by employing longitudinal designs, larger and more diverse sample sizes, and in-depth analyses of family dynamics and mental health outcomes.

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